

**UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT**

**Office of Censorship**

**WASHINGTON, D. C.**

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# **CODE OF WARTIME PRACTICES**

***For Nonmilitary Radio Services \****

**\* Does not include broadcast stations now operating under the Code of Wartime Practices for American Broadcasters, or International Broadcast Stations.**

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### FOREWORD

By Presidential authorization the Office of Censorship has two responsibilities.

Executive Order No. 8985, signed on December 19, 1941, provides that the Director of Censorship "shall cause to be censored, in his absolute discretion, communications by mail, cable, radio, and other means of transmission passing between the United States and any foreign country." Under this order, international communications of the character indicated, including short wave international radio broadcasts, are subjected to a strict censorship.

Secondly, the President issued a separate instruction to the Director of Censorship to coordinate the voluntary efforts of press and radio in the domestic field to keep dangerous information out of circulation at home. To this end Codes of Wartime Practices have been issued requesting that information on certain enumerated subjects be kept out of print and off the air, and compliance with these requests has been universal.

Point to point and other domestic communications may be regarded as falling somewhere between these two fields of operation. On the one hand it is entirely possible that many such communications may actually be international in character since they can conceivably be heard outside the country. On the domestic side the reasons which prompt restrictions of newspapers and standard broadcasting stations apply equally in the case of the various radio services dealt with in the following code.

It will be the policy of the Office of Censorship to deal with this problem on a voluntary basis. In other words, it is a Code of War-time Practices, similar in intent to the codes already in operation in the newspaper and standard broadcasting fields which the Office of Censorship now issues to those responsible for the operation of the thousands of radio stations in services other than military broadcasting.

The stations to which the following code provisions apply are operated by Federal, State, municipal, and private groups and individuals in behalf of law enforcement, aviation, war emergencies, civilian defense, experimental activities, harbor traffic, weather serv-

ices, flood control, forestry services, surveys, administrative work, emergencies, and miscellaneous other uses. Among those agencies involved are the United States Department of Agriculture, the Civil Aeronautics Authority, the United States Department of Commerce, the War Manpower Commission, the Department of Justice of the United States, the Federal Security Agency, the Federal Works Administration, the United States Department of the Interior, the Federal Communications Commission, the Tennessee Valley Authority, the United States Treasury Department, the Office of Civilian Defense, and State and municipal police systems.

In offering this code, there is no thought of curtailing any existing service which is deemed *absolutely essential* by those in charge. But it must be remembered that a radio signal knows no bounds, and that the enemy may be listening very near to the transmitter. The main purpose is to emphasize the necessity for utmost caution at all times in the use of radio in the light of national security as it relates to the war effort. The Office of Censorship requests that all such services be reviewed and measured against this code and adaptations be made in routine to conform with the various provisions as outlined. An excellent rule-of-thumb policy is this—*Abandon all unnecessary use of radio facilities. Any use absolutely essential to service will invariably be of greater benefit to our war effort than it will be of aid to the enemy. The unnecessary use of facilities which discloses information of value to the enemy is a total loss to our war effort.*

Censorship is a powerful military weapon. It is a weapon that every individual can use against the enemy and, therefore, it is the responsibility of every American, no matter how engaged, to help prevent the dissemination of information which will aid the enemy's efforts against us. This code requests that information in the following categories be so transmitted as to be of the least possible value to those forces which oppose the United Nations.

(a) *Weather.*—Weather data should not be transmitted unless absolutely essential to an existing service. Under such conditions, regular transmissions of weather data should be made in code or in some prearranged manner so as not to disclose complete weather details. Transmissions pertaining to flood conditions should be made without disclosing weather information. Road information should be given without detailed descriptions of attending weather. Emergency warnings issued by the Weather Bureau should be transmitted only when authorized by the Weather Bureau, and in the language designated.

NOTE.—Special directives have already been issued by some Government services engaged in dispensing weather information, and the above request is not intended to conflict with these directives.

(b) *Armed forces.*—Information concerning troops and troop movements should not be transmitted in detail. Special care should

be taken in this respect in connection with troops disposed for tactical purposes, embarkation, or disembarkation. This request applies to the troops of friendly nations on American soil as well as troops of the United States Army, Navy, and Marine Corps. Information concerning an individual well known for a specialized activity should be used carefully so as not to disclose possible future military operations. Names of naval personnel should never be linked with ships or bases. Essential transmissions of information concerning troops and troop movements should be anticipated whenever possible so that the information can be handled by code or some such prearranged method for the exchange of messages.

(c) *Ships*.—All essential transmissions pertaining to ships and ship movements should be made in code or in such a way as to not disclose the identity, type, or location of the vessel. This applies to Navy vessels, merchant ships, transports, convoys, and other vessels of the United States, as well as neutral vessels and vessels of nations opposing the Axis Powers. Similar information pertaining to enemy naval or merchant vessels should be safeguarded in a like manner. Information or instructions pertaining to sea defenses, shipyards, vessels under construction, or launchings should not be transmitted in detail.

NOTE.—The above request does not apply to merchant vessels plying the Great Lakes or other sheltered inland waterways, except as designated by the United States Navy Department.

(d) *Damage by enemy land, sea, or air attack*.—Information concerning damage to military objectives, sinkings, or damage to naval or merchant vessels or transports, should not be transmitted unless absolutely necessary, and in any such case effort should be made to clear such information with Army or Navy authorities before transmission, if possible. In case of air raid, estimates of the number of planes involved, flight courses, the number of bombs dropped, and damage done, should be avoided. Warnings and reports of impending air raids and instructions for countermeasures of defense should not be detailed in plain English. Wherever possible such use of facilities should be anticipated and arrangements made to transmit in code or some other secret method.

NOTE.—Nothing in the above is intended to prevent licensed stations in the Emergency Radio Services from performing their authorized functions as permitted by military authorities under emergency conditions.

(e) *Aircraft*.—All information concerning military air units of the United States and United Nations, the Civil Air Patrol, commercial aircraft operating for military purposes, United States and United Nations Air Forces Ferrying Commands and commercial aircraft under such ferrying commands, and commercial aircraft in international traffic, should be carefully guarded. When essential to transmit

such information, it should be transmitted in code or some such secret device if possible. In no case should such transmissions disclose detailed information in plain English concerning the type, movement, and mission of aircraft.

NOTE.—Special directives have already been issued by some Government services responsible for planes and plane movements, and the above request is not intended to conflict with these directives.

(f) *Fortifications and bases.*—The location of forts and fortifications, including antiaircraft guns, barrage balloons and other air defenses, bomb shelters, camouflaged objects, and coast defense emplacements, should not be disclosed in plain English. Essential transmissions in connection with forts and fortifications should be anticipated and codes or secret methods equally effective be developed for handling such transmissions.

(g) *Production and transportation.*—All information pertaining to war production plants, secret military designs, formulas, or experiments, secret manufacturing processes or factory designs, the production and transportation of war materials, including the identification of such materials as to kind and amount, should be carefully guarded to prevent possible sabotage. Once again the warning is against using specific detailed information in transmissions, and once again the request is that such transmissions be handled in code or some other secret process. This same warning in connection with sabotage applies to objectives outside the realm of war production plants and production and transportation of war materials.

(h) *Communications.*—Special care should be exercised against the disclosure of information concerning the location of communication facilities and control centers.

(i) *General—Unconfirmed reports and rumors.*—All such reports and rumors should be referred to the proper investigative agency immediately. Especially should this procedure be followed in cases of bombing incidents and sabotage. Every effort should be made to avoid public panic.

*Forest fires.*—All use of radio in the handling of forest fires, including descriptions of danger areas, weather conditions, activity or methods of saboteurs, organization or placement of special guards, damage or threat of damage to military objectives, or extent of smoke clouds, should be limited to an exchange of information necessary only to safety of life and property.

*Internment camps and resettlement centers.*—Location and description of such camps and centers should not be disclosed in detail. Names of persons moved to such camps and centers should be avoided if possible. Identification of persons arrested, questioned or interned, including prisoners of war, should be handled in such a way as to not disclose the true identity.

*Diplomatic information and military intelligence.*—The whereabouts or movements of the President of the United States, official, military, or diplomatic personages, missions or agents of the United States or any nation opposing the Axis Powers, as well as matters pertaining to military intelligence, should not be disclosed in plain English. Such matters should be handled in code or with some equally effective method. This request applies especially to routes, schedules, and destination.

*Emergency announcements.*—All announcements of an emergency nature should be carefully checked if the origin is questionable. However, there is nothing in this request intended to delay the speedy execution of duty as it relates to matters of death, or public safety of life and property.

*Control of radio equipment.*—Authorities in charge should take every possible precaution to assure that the radio equipment will always be in the control of and transmissions monitored by a trusted and dependable employee. Transmissions in a foreign language should not be permitted.

*Personnel.*—All employees should be carefully observed by the authority in charge to determine the exact conduct and intent of purpose of those having access to the transmitter.

The Office of Censorship desires to point out once again the importance of a thorough check of existing radio services, with a view to eliminating any service not deemed essential. Whenever practicable, in the transmission of the types of information covered by this code, wire facilities should be used. It is well to remember always the overall purpose of the war effort. Weigh carefully the values of the information being disclosed. Ask yourself, "Is this information of definite value to our progress toward victory, or is it of more value to the enemy?"

This Code of Practices, both in language and intent, has been prepared with the assistance of both Government and non-Government agencies. In the execution of the code, all concerned are urged to communicate with the Government or non-Government headquarters under whom they operate with any questions or suggestions. The Office of Censorship, too, will welcome any inquiries. Simply address the Office of Censorship, Washington, D. C. Telephone: Executive 3800.

THE OFFICE OF CENSORSHIP,  
BYRON PRICE, *Director*.

MARCH 1, 1943.

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